UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/45/PV.26
18 October 1990

ENGLISH

Forty-fifth session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 9 October 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. de MARCO (Malta)

later: Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil)
(Vice-President)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Gyaw (Myanmar)
Mr. Ricardo Garcia (Dominican Republic)
Mr. De L'Estrac (Mauritius)

Address by Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho

Statement made by

Mr. Maynard (Bahamas)

- Electoral assistance to Haiti: draft resolution (A/45/L.2) [154]

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. GYAW (Myanmar): Sir, allow me to begin by offering you the warmest felicitations of the delegation of the Union of Myanmar on your assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at the forty-fifth session. Your unanimous election to this high office is an expression of the confidence of the entire membership in the outstanding qualities of leadership you have amply demonstrated during your long and distinguished career. It is also a tribute to the active and constructive role played by Malta in international relations.

I wish also to express the deep appreciation of my delegation to Mr. Garba of Nigeria for his invaluable contribution to the success of the forty-fourth session and of the three special sessions of the Assembly held during his tenure.

May I also take this opportunity to pay a well-deserved tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his total commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and for his tireless efforts to promote international peace and justice as well as understanding and co-operation among nations. The world is indeed fortunate to have him at the helm of the Organization at this crucial juncture in the history of mankind.

My delegation takes great pleasure in warmly welcoming to our midst the Principality of Liechtenstein. We have already had occasion to extend a similar welcome to Namibia earlier in the year. As the delegations of Namibia and Liechtenstein take their rightful places in this Assembly, the United Nations has come a step nearer to its ultimate goal of universality of membership.

Myanmar has consistently held the view that no State that is able and willing to fulfil the obligations of membership of the United Nations should be denied admission to our Organization. Therefore we support the expressed desire of the

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Republic of Korea to join our ranks - this without prejudice to the goal of eventual Korean reunification. In this regard, we welcome the initiation of high-level intra-Korean dialogue and earnestly hope that it will lead to an early agreement on the reunification of the long-divided Korean nation.

On 3 October last the German nation became one again. As an ardent supporter of the cause of peaceful reunification of divided nations, Myanmar warmly welcomes that momentous event. We are confident that the united Germany, with its renewed spirit and vast resources, will increasingly become a major force for peace, stability and prosperity not only in Europe but in the world at large.

In the same spirit we are pleased to welcome the peaceful merger of the two Yemeni States.

The forty-fifth session of the General Assembly is meeting at a time of historic and profound changes world wide. The past 12 months have witnessed an acceleration of the qualitative change in the relationship between the two super-Powers and between the two major military alliances. Ideological barriers which had once generated a deep-seated adversary psychosis and which had long bedevilled relations among States have virtually disappeared. These have given way to new attitudes and perceptions, resulting in a new pattern of relationship that has moved beyond the stage of a mere relaxation of tension to a stage of active co-operation and partnership.

All these transformations have brought the world to the threshold of a new era. Never since the end of the Second World War has there been a more favourable political climate or a better opportunity for the nations of the world to fashion a new international order based on the timeless principles enshrined in the Charter.

The immediate impact of this changing situation is the emergence of a collegial spirit among the permanent members of the Security Council, which has

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greatly enhanced its effective functioning. We welcome this development, which we believe could act as a deterrent to individual States or group of States from resorting to actions inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter. It could also inhibit hegemonic ambitions, at either the global or the regional level. However, the world must pay heed to the caution sounded by our Secretary-General in his latest report on the work of the Organization:

> "agreement among the major Powers must carry with it the support of a majority of Member States if it is to make the desired impact on the world situation. It is the willing endorsement of the decisions of the Security Council by the international community that can best counter any impression, likely to create anxiety, of world affairs being run by a directorate." (A/45/1, p. 13)

The steadily increasing trust and confidence in inter-State relations generated by the dramatic improvement of relations between the two militarily most significant Powers have opened a window of opportunity for the international community to come to grips with the various outstanding questions in the field of arms control and disarmament. Military doctrines born of the cold war and based on adversarial strategies, which had fuelled the spiralling arms race of the past decades, have become largely irrelevant. While notable achievements, such as the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, have been made, the pace of negotiations on reduction of strategic arsenals, banning of chemical weapons and cessation of all nuclear-weapon tests, to mention only a few, has been agonizingly slow. We earnestly hope that endeavours will be made to speed up the pace of disarmament negotiations and to set higher, more ambitious targets within shorter time frames, for the reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear and other mass-destruction weapons. Moreover, massive conventional forces should be pared down to the levels needed for purposes of legitimate national self-defence.

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As we stand at the threshold of a new era we see looming ahead both exceptional promises and daunting challenges.

In April of this year, the entire world rejoiced at the peaceful transition of Namibia to independence. The Namibian experience has renewed hopes for a peaceful change in South Africa leading to a total dismantling of the universally condemned system of apartheid. These hopes have been reinforced by positive factors conducive to such a change that have emerged in the country during the past months.

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Foremost among them is the exemplary far-sightedness, wisdom and statesmanship that has marked Mr. Nelson Mandela's every action and pronouncements ever since his release from prison. Due credit must also be given to the political courage displayed by President De Klerk in pledging to abandon apartheid and to seek a peaceful transition to a new South Africa, non-racial and democratic. Thanks to the pragmatism and realism displayed by them, the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the South African Government have been able to adopt a joint declaration aimed at accelerating the political process towards a negotiated settlement. Promising though the situation is, it is yet too early to assume with complete assurance that the process for positive change in that country has become irreversible and that an end to the apartheid system is within reach. Apartheid laws and apartheid structures are still in place. We urge the South African Government to do away with these pillars of the outdated system as soon as possible in response to the will of the international community expressed in the Declaration adopted at the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly. In the meantime, the international community must not relax its existing pressure in order to convince the yet unrepentant sections of the white minority that apartheid has no future in their country.

The resolution of the conflict in Nicaragua, in which the United Nations played a major role, encourages us to hope that the search for peaceful settlement of the conflicts in some other Central American States, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, will soon bear fruit.

Myanmar is a South-East Asian country having close historical ties and cultural affinities with other countries in our sub-region. We are therefore most happy to see significant progress made in the past few weeks towards ending strife in neighbouring Camodia. We welcome Security Council resolution 668 (1990) of 20 September 1990, endorsing the framework for the comprehensive political

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settlement of the conflict in that country, formulated by its permanent members. We welcome, in particular, the acceptance by all the Cambodian parties of this framework in its entirety as the basis for settling the conflict, and the agreement reached by them at the recent Jakarta meeting to form a Supreme National Council. Having regard to the complexities of the conflict, particularly in its international aspects, we agree that the United Nations must play a significant role in the Cambodian peace process. In this connection, we feel that it is only fair that the States Members of the United Nations which are not directly involved in this process should be fully apprised in advance of the resource implications of the contemplated United Nations operations in Cambodia, in particular those of a financial nature.

With the depth and clarity of perception that has become the hallmark of his assessments of the state of the world the Secretary-General in his latest annual report, has alluded to:

"the dawn of a new era in Europe, streaks of light in some regions and the darkness of old animosities and new hatreds enveloping others. (A/45/1, p. 3)

The region where "old animosities and new hatreds" are casting their long shadows of darkeness and are threatening to undermine the promise of a more peaceful, just and securre international order is the Middle East.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent purported annexation of Kuwait are acts of aggression by any definition. The prohibition enunciated in the Charter principle that all States

"shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State"

is absolute. Whenever and wherever this fundamental principle is violated, it is incumbent upon all peace-loving and law-abiding States to stand resolutely and collectively in defence of this vital fundamental principle in conformity with the

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provisions of the Charter. The decisions on the situation taken by the Security Council to date, whose objective is to restore the status quo ante in Kuwait, constitute decisive action to uphold the sanctity of this principle. That is why the Union of Myanmar unreservedly supports these decisions and took immediate action to ensure that all Myanmar Government agencies, private entities and individuals strictly comply with the terms of Security Councl resolution 661 (1990). The essential purpose of these decisions is, in our view, to terminate the act of aggression and its consequences through political and diplomatic means. Given the fact that the Gulf region has now been transformed into the scene of the world's heaviest concentration of multinational adversarial military forces deployed in battle-ready formations, and given the latent volatility of the Middle East as a whole, any other course of action to bring about the objectives set forth in the Security Council resolutions would be fraught with incalculable and far-reaching dangers.

The crisis in the Gulf has underscored the urgency to redouble efforts to find a just and durable solution to the Middle East problem as a whole. At the core of this problems is the question of Palestine. We firmly believe that a comprehensive, just and hence lasting solution to this problem must be based on the principle of respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area, including Israel, coupled with the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to national independence and sovereignty. Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) continue to remain the only workable basis for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East in consonance with the above-mentioned principles. To that end, my delegation wholeheartedly supports the proposal to hold an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties concerned on an equal footing.

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A comprehensive and definitive solution to the larger problems in the Middle East requires renewed efforts to find a solution to the Lebanese problem in a manner that would re-establish its full sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

The year 1990 is a remarkable year for international efforts to combat the scourge of illicit drugs. The seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, on narcotic drugs, held in New York in February this year, and the World Ministerial Summit to Reduce Demand for Drugs and to Combat the Cocaine Threat, held in London last April, marked two important milestone in the history of mankind's war on illicit drugs. The Global Plan of Action adopted by the seventeenth special session and the Declaration issued at the London Ministerial Summit have given added impetus and sense of purpose to the international campaign against narcotic drugs.

We in Myanmar continue to intensify our relentless war on illicit drugs, carrying forward the momentum generated by our nation-wide anti-drug campaigns and programmes which have been in full swing since independence. The multi-faceted and multi-sectoral anti-drug measures being undertaken by the Myanmar authorities nation-wide are making steady headway on all fronts. In Feburary this year and again in April, heroin and other narcotic drugs worth $921 million at prevailing street prices in the United States were destroyed in Yangon in full view of members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of United Nations agencies and foreign journalists.

Our multi-faceted and multi-sectoral anti-illicit-drug strategy includes a programme for the development of frontier areas and national races. This programme, which places parrticular emphasis on infrastructure-building, crop substitution, livestock breeding and the overall alleviation of socio-economic conditions in border areas, is making a perceptible impact on the all-round

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development of rural areas in 44 townships in the border regions. As a result of three successive five-year projects carried out in co-operation with the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, a total of 163,000 acres have been put under cash-crops in place of the poppy plantations. Steps are also being taken to consolidate further the progress so far accomplished and to extend similar development projects to more townships in the border areas.

(Mr. Gyaw, Myanmar)

In parallel with these national efforts, Myanmar has already established close co-operative arrangements with two of our neighbouring countries, China and Thailand. These arrangements include exchanges of information on drug trafficking and related activities along our common borders, training of drug-enforcement personnel and transfer of technology. They complement and reinforce each country's national drug-control programmes and activities. Plans are well in hand to establish similar co-operative arrangements with another neighbouring country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic. These endeavours are currently being undertaken on a bilateral basis but are expected to develop into a broader co-operative arrangement at the subregional level.

In view of the progress achieved thus far and of the definite plans and programmes which we will be energetically carrying out in the future, we have ample reason to visualize the total eradication of poppy cultivation and of the menace of illicit drugs in Myanmar in the shortest possible time.*

On 27 May 1990, the first multi-party general elections in nearly three decades were successfully held in my country in response to the ardent wishes and aspirations of the people of Myanmar. This historic event constitutes the fulfilment of the solemn promise, made by the State Law and Order Restoration Council on the very first day of its assumption of national responsibility, and reaffirmed on numerous subsequent occasions. The elections were held in strict observance of the Election Law and Rules, under the supervision of an independent five-member Election Commission. The fact that the elections were genuinely free and fair, beyond any doubt, was universally recognized by all the political

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* Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Gyaw, Myanmar)

parties which contested the elections and by a large group of foreign journalists, representing 32 news agencies, who observed the elections at first hand.

In a remarkably high turn-out, 72.59 per cent of eligible voters went to the polls on election day and exercised one of the most fundamental human rights, that is, their right to elect National Assembly representatives of their choice, without let or hindrance.

Having fulfilled its promise to hold free and fair multi-party elections, the State Law and Order Restoration Council is now taking firm steps - systematically and step by step - towards the establishement of a stable and enduring democratic State.

Questions have been raised in some quarters regarding transfer of power to a democratically elected Government in my country. In this connection, I should like to stress that our leaders have given assurances on several occasions that the State Law and Order Restoration Council will hand over power in due course to a strong and stable Government that is to be formed in accordance with a new constitution to be drafted.

Those who have raised such questions do not seem to be aware of the due process of law that is now taking place in Myanmar in accordance with the Election Law. Under the relevant provisions of the Law, a number of candidates have filed objections with the Election Commission against their opponents. Both the petitioners and the respondents represent a broad cross-section of political parties, including the National League for Democracy, the National Unity Party and some independents. The Government has thus far set up five tribunals, with widely respected retired law officers and civil service personnel, to investigate these objections. The tribunals are presently conducting their court proceedings and

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hearings. This due process of law must be allowed to complete its course; those petitioners exercising their rights under the Election Law cannot be denied their lawful rights.

A strong and stable Government presupposes a strong and enduring constitution. The next indispensable step, therefore, is the drafting of such a constitution in order to lay a solid foundation for a democratic State, to which the people of Myanmar aspire.

The new constitution needs to be drafted with great care in order to ensure that the shortcomings and loopholes of the old constitution of 1947, which was drawn up before Myanmar became independent, do not find their way into the new instrument.

Needless to say, it must be elaborated meticulously, comprehensively and systematically. It must be based on national consensus and must be acceptable to the majority of the people of Myanmar, as well as to the majority of the national races living in the Union. To that end, the authorities of Myanmar are taking all necessary measures, step by step, and plan to meet with the elected representatives of the Pyithu Hluttaw (National Assembly). A broadly based national convention will be convened to discuss all factors that should be taken into account in drafting the new Constitution. Its drafting will be the responsibility of the elected representatives. The State Law and Order Restoration Council and the Defence Services will do their utmost to assist them in this task.

Until such time as a firm, constitutionally established Government comes into existence, the State Law and Order Restoration Council will continue to fulfil its national responsibilities, the most important of which is to safeguard the three cardinal national causes, namely, to prevent the disintegration of the Union, to ensure the non-disintegration of national solidarity and to ensure the perpetuity of our country's sovereignty.

(Mr. Gyaw, Myanmar)

Myanmar is known for its unique culture, whose hallmarks are tolerance and compassion. This cultural environment underpins respect for human rights, which not only are protected by law but are also observed in practice as a matter of tradition. Discrimination, be it on grounds of race, religion or sex, is non-existent in my country.

We have been co-operating closely with the Commission on Human Rights, its subsidiary bodies and the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, and have been providing information to them on the situation of human rights in our country. We shall continue to do so in the future. Let me take this opportunity to inform the Assembly that the Government of Myanmar has agreed to, and indeed welcomes, the visit to our country of Professor Sadako Ogata, an independent expert appointed by the Commission on Human Rights. She will shortly be arriving in Myanmar to carry out her mandate.

Questions have been raised in certain quarters concerning the restraint placed on certain individuals in my country. As we have clarified on numerous occasions, legal action has been taken against those persons not for their political activities but for their infringement of the existing laws of the land. I should like to emphasize that a line must be drawn between respect for human rights, on the one hand, and maintenance of law and public order in accordance with existing laws, on the other. Every Government has the primary responsibility to maintain law and order in its country and to prevent anarchy and disorder. I might add that the actions taken against the persons in question are the most lenient prescribed by our laws, even though the acts perpetrated by them, which include instigating the general public to defy the legal authority and forming a parallel government, make them liable to much sterner penalties under our criminal laws.

(Mr. Gyaw, Myanmar)

I hardly need to stress here that our national undertaking to establish a peaceful and prosperous multi-party democratic State must be accomplished by the people of Myanmar themselves in accordance with Myanmar's outlook and in the Myanmar way, so as to suit our nation's own specific conditions and circumstances. The international community can best help that process by refraining from interfering or bringing pressure to bear in any shape or form and by letting the people of Myanmar proceed along their own path until they reach their chosen destiny of a free and democratic State.

Mr. RICARDO GARCIA (Dominican Republic) (interpretation from Spanish): I should like my words to this Assembly, to which are brought such important problems and thorny situations, to be a fervent message of the faith and hope of the Dominican Government, a message brought from the heart of the land where the first institutions were established after the discovery of America and the meeting of races and cultures.

On behalf of the Dominican Republic, I wish most sincerely to congratulate Mr. Guido de Marco on his having been elected President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. In conferring on him such an outstanding honour, the Organization has recognized his outstanding diplomatic work and his devotion to the cause of peace.

We also wish to congratulate the President of the forty-fourth session, the Ambassador of Nigeria, Major General Joseph Garba, on the excellent work he did and on the wisdom and discretion with which he overcame innumerable obstacles.

We reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who has spared no efforts in the cause of world peace. He has even made several trips to that region of anguish the Middle East, and has established valuable personal contacts with the aim of finding a negotiated solution to the crisis that affects that region, in particular the Persian Gulf.

We wish to place on record the great pleasure of the Dominican Republic at the admission of Namibia to the Organization. That country should have taken its seat here long ago, but finally its admission has become a reality.

It is with great pleasure that we associate ourselves with the expressions of solidarity made here following the admission of the State of Liechtenstein. It has been welcomed with much pleasure as a member of this family of nations, which has thus come nearer to universality.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,
Dominican Republic)

At this crucial moment in contemporary history it is an imperative need for the Organization to carry out its sacred mission of safeguarding peace at all costs. Scarcely five years ago tensions between the nuclear Powers were growing more acute, and the arms race had accelerated greatly and represented a terrible danger to human existence. The talks and the agreements on the elimination of short- and medium-range missiles prove that with political will peace can be maintained.

The unexpected and brutal invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, which overthrew its legitimate Government and violated the sovereignty of a virtually helpless nation, has been condemned by the whole international community. Such is the enormity of this violation perpetrated at all levels by the reckless Iraqi leader, on whom all eyes are fixed in horror, that we cannot foresee the future course of these events.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, in his introductory statement to the forty-fifth session, indicated his concern over the crisis in the Persian Gulf and the resultant danger of a vast conflagration. The Dominican Republic, as an active member of the community of nations, fully supports the terms and substance of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council in view of this grave violation, this armed attack that has usurped the sovereignty of a State, and invokes the inherent right of self-defence as the necessary response of the international community in the face of this gross and unprecedented annexation.

Turning now to my country, the President of the Republic, Dr. Joaquin Balaguer, after being re-elected in May and assuming office in mid-August this year, has been striving to carry out the arduous task of the modernization of our State at all levels, executing a plan of economic adjustment and national consultation among labour, management and the general public, which should end with the establishment of our economy on a sound basis.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,
Dominican Republic)

Nevertheless, our country, like other developing countries, is facing the serious problem of external debt, aggravated by the persistently low prices of our export commodities.

The debt is a heavy burden that hinders our growth and development. Reforms of economic policy and structural adjustment that we have carried out cannot be fully effective unless the developed countries adopt measures to alleviate this insupportable burden of debt. In this regard we greatly welcome the initiative of President Bush to grant partial forgiveness of the concessional debt and we urge creditor countries to implement similar programmes to reduce or cancel debt through official assistance, since now that the debt has become unpayable it has turned into a problem that can only be dealt with through international co-operation.

I should indicate that the Head of the Dominican State has achieved the best results in his policy of providing the country with the infrastructure it requires for its growth and subsequent development. Here we should mention the construction of housing, hospitals, sports facilities, schools, local road networks, aqueducts and dams. His Government enjoys general recognition and gratitude for the striking results of the creation of new free trade zones in different areas of our country. He is also credited with being the real initiator and main driving force of tourism and the growing development of the tourist infrastructure of our country.

This vast work of national renewal has been made possible thanks to the climate of democracy, confidence and security prevailing in our country and thanks to the absolute respect of the Government for the free exercise of human rights, from the main human right, the right to life, to unrestricted freedom of expression and thought.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia,
Dominican Republic)

In this way the noble principles enshrined in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international covenants on the subject are being translated into reality. Any foreigner coming to the Dominican Republic can see the reality of a proverbially hospitable nation that enjoys peace, quiet and order under the total protection of its competent authorities.

We have always been opposed to any form of racial discrimination because such discrimination constitutes a flagrant violation of human rights. So it is a subject of justified pleasure to see how the South African President, Frederik De Klerk, is becoming reconciled to this view and how he has admitted to the press the possibility of candidates of any race having the right to vote. That presages the beginning of the process that will finally lead to the elimination of the hated system of apartheid.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia, Dominican Republic)

Any act of discrimination, regardless of its form and regardless of the person or entity it is directed against, is to be censured and is contrary to morality and law. In the light of this reflection, the delegation of the Dominican Republic believes that the resolution which equated Zionism with racism is in and of itself an act of discrimination, and thus we feel that it should be repealed.

The unification of the Korean peninsula is a subject of the greatest concern to the international community. The Dominican Republic expresses its pleasure at the advances made by the communities of South Korea and North Korea in the areas of economic co-operation and cultural exchange as part of the process of rapprochement, which, on the basis of dialogue and negotiation between the two sides, could lead to the reunification of Korea. Accordingly, until the achievement of that unity, we would favour the admission of South Korea to the United Nations.

The reunification of Germany, an event of such extraordinary importance that it does not need to be emphasized here, constitutes a veritable milestone in the history of the United Nations. It represents the most outstanding case of integration and national reconciliation in the post-war period. It shows how much can be accomplished by fraternity and solidarity, and it is the most striking example of integration in this new era of changes and opportunities that can lead to a better future for mankind.*

Aware of the extremely serious problem of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, the Dominican Government is implementing severe measures to combat that scourge which so cruelly afflicts mankind. Our authorities are waging active

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia, Dominican Republic)

campaigns for the prevention of drug abuse, while taking vigorous administrative, judicial and legislative action against the production, use and marketing of and illicit trafficking in drugs.

I feel it is appropriate here to turn to a subject that is of great interest today: the process of transition to a democratic system that has been going on for some time now in the Republic of Haiti. On this subject the Dominican delegation expresses its satisfaction at the encouraging progress made in the preparations for the holding of presidential elections that will soon take place in that country. The Dominican Republic therefore favours the provision of assistance by the United Nations in the form of observers appointed by our Organization to assist the Haitian nation during the elections.

By an accident of fate the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic share the same island and have known similar vicissitudes on their respective paths towards independence and sovereignty, and therefore we are most interested in seeing our sister nation achieve stability. But our country's fundamental interest is not limited to that aspect; it also concerns Haiti's political and economic development.

Haiti needs the support of the entire international community, since until we, the nations of this hemisphere, have thus far confined ourselves to pointing out the problems without striving to find the right solutions to them. For that reason, we feel it is time to discuss this delicate situation before the Assembly. Its scope is more than national, even than regional, and it has become a question that deserves the attention of the international community.

The Dominican Republic, familiar with the problems of our neighbour country and aware of its own historic responsibilities, has found it necessary to receive a constant flow of Haitian immigrants, numbering more than 1 million, who are competing freely with the Dominican labour force. Our country accepts this

(Mr. Ricardo Garcia, Dominican Republic)

immigration since one of the cardinal principles of its foreign policy is to regard solidarity as the highest elevated expression of human coexistence. Thus Haitian nationals also enjoy the same benefits and prerogatives as Dominicans, in an atmosphere of security and respect without discrimination of any kind.

Lastly, we are particularly pleased to state that as the obstacles to the full rehabilitation of Haiti are gradually overcome, opportunities for greater co-operation between our two countries will increase and we shall march together towards the achievement of our most cherished ideals and our highest national aspirations.

In conclusion, I should like to stress our conviction that the United Nations is the authentic custodian that will preserve the inestimable treasure of the lofty values extolled at the dawn of a new era of harmony and peace. This bright awakening of the universal conscience reflects the emergence of an era based on the high principles enshrined in the Charter of this noble institution, the nurturing source of all the hopes and desires of mankind.

Mr. De L'ESTRAC (Mauritius): We are delighted that the forty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly is being presided over by a distinguished personally from Malta, an island whose active involvement in international affairs is well known and which, like Mauritius, has been the crossroads of many civilizations.

I am confident, Mr. President, that the experience and wisdom you bring to this high office will enrich our deliberations and help us uphold the principles of our Organization during these trying times when the security of small nations is being threatened.

Addressing the Assembly for the first time, I am personally pleased to say how proud we are to belong to an Organization which today commands respect and

(Mr. De L'Estrac, Mauritius)

authority. As a representative of a small, open, democratic and multiracial State without any defence capabilities, I find cause for satisfaction in the knowledge that membership in this Organization is not a vain hope and that the United Nations has the capacity to safeguard international law. It is comforting to note that our Organization, besides having the duty to assert the law, has also the ability to enforce it and to uphold respect for the right of States, small and large and from the North and the South, to exist in peace and harmony.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that this newly found ability will bring to small Member States - which, after all, form the majority of the membership of this Organization - a sense of security based on the right to exist peacefully, as enshrined in our Charter.

(Mr. De L'Estrac, Mauritius)

I do not think it unfair to recall that such a situation is relatively new. Recent history abounds with examples where the international community was sadly incapable not only of clearly enunciating the law but also of assuming its obligations and ensuring that these rules, approved by all, were respected.

Freer now of these past constraints, of which small States were often the unwilling instruments, our Organization, with its new-found unity, its new cohesion, has today the means to fulfil its primary objective.

On the other hand let us not forget that the apparent cohesion of the international community and the will displayed by the United Nations are still precarious. We might ask ourselves whether the unprecedented demonstration of international solidarity in the present Gulf crisis is not motivated as much by vested interests as by respect for international law.

It is imperative therefore that we display a renewed sense of our attachment to our fundamental principles wherever and whenever the law is infringed. Let it be recorded that the United Nations has already to its credit the efficient settlement of serious conflicts, and here we should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General for the zeal, dedication and vision he displays as head of our Organization.

Unfortunately, unresolved crises still cast a shadow on the good faith of our Organization. Inequality among peoples still abounds across the world. The Palestinians, Lebanese, Fijians, oppressed by brutal and inhuman forces, certainly deserve the same solidarity as we are today expressing towards the Kuwaiti people.

Imbued with this ideal, Mauritius has firmly condemned the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and we join in the appeals that have been made for the restoration of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Kuwait. We have entertained good relations with both countries. Kuwait used to supply us with half our petroleum needs. Our political and diplomatic relations with Iraq have been friendly.

(Mr. De L'Estrac, Mauritius)

Although peace appears illusive, we nurture the hope that reconciliation will avert any breakout of military hostilities. Let us give diplomacy a chance and thus avoid the dire consequences for the Near East and the rest of the world.

The conflict in the Gulf region seemed even more aberrant at a time when momentous events in Europe and elsewhere towards peace and reconciliation were occurring. The new bonds of friendship that have been woven between the USSR and the United States of America, inspired by President Gorbachev and President Bush, the end of the cold war era and of ideological conflicts, the triumph of liberty and democracy around the world have raised hopes for a new phase of development based on peace. Poorer countries, relieved of the burden of proxy wars that diverted much of their slender resources, will now be more able to address priority tasks in the struggle against underdevelopment and poverty. Alas, the Gulf cris rudely brought us back to reality. The end of the East-West conflict could well be succeeded by an era of lawlessness jeopardizing the security of small States in the face of ambitious designs of powerfully armed neighbours and adversaries.

All too often our desire for global solutions has not been matched by political will. Up to now international negotiations on economic and development issues, on trade, the debt problem and the environment have resulted in protracted debates but few genuine breakthroughs. As the world is overtaken by the pace of history, nations seem to fall back on old reflexes.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the field of disarmament and security, where the threat of war and aggression remains. In the emerging multipolar world, smaller States are especially vulnerable to such a threat. The capacity of some States to acquire huge and modern arsenals for use in regional conflicts will constitute one of the greatest threats to the security of smaller States.

(Mr. De L'Estrac, Mauritius)

Positive development, such as the conclusion of the 1987 Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear missiles, the talks on strategic arms reduction, and the decrease of conventional forces in Europe are encouraging. The international community should not overlook the real dangers to peace posed at a regional level and should address them in a concrete way.

In this regard my delegation wishes to reiterate its commitment to the creation of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. My Government regrets the withdrawal of the major Western Powers from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean at a time when real progress was at hand, and we express the hope that recent events in the Gulf region will convince them of the urgent necessity of working towards the establishment of a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean.

Those who appeal to world solidarity and support in times of trial cannot afford to ignore the just aspirations of smaller nations to peace. Countries of the region should recognize that a degree of flexibility might be necessary to overcome controversial issues and advance the cause of peace and security in our part of the world. The efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee at this juncture should not be undermined, and all avenues for progress must remain open.

Genuine negotiations on a zone of peace would lead to significant progress in other areas, such as that of naval disarmament. Confidence- and security-building measures would reduce the risks of incidents and confrontations at sea and would enhance the security of coastal States and contribute to a safer regional environment.

While we are addressing the issue of the Indian Ocean, we wish to reiterate our just and rightful claim to the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia, and express our deep appreciation of the whole-hearted support of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity, as well as that of other friendly countries.

(Mr. De l'Estrac, Mauritius)

We also attach great importance to current negotiations within the Review Conference on the nuclear-non-proliferation Treaty and its eventual extension in 1995. At a time when modern armament is increasingly multidimensional and technologically advanced, the proliferation of nuclear weapons constitutes a major threat to the security of all States.

Nuclear-weapon States should therefore demonstrate greater willingness to reduce their arsenals and commit themselves to a process of disarmament by offering, in addition, specific security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. Similarly, restraint and control should be exercised for other weapons of mass destruction. The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty at the forthcoming partial test-ban Treaty amendment Conference next year should be encouraged to the full.

The most remarkable event on our continent was the achievement of the independence of Namibia after years of relentless struggle. We extend to Namibia a warm and brotherly welcome. Another equally important landmark was the liberation of Nelson Mandela. His historic address from the rostrum of this Hall displayed the conviction of his long and heroic struggle against the evils of apartheid.

The situation in South Africa has remained precarious despite genuine progress towards a negotiated peaceful political settlement. It is our view that we should give cautious encouragement to further such progress until it becomes permanent and irreversible, leading to the total eradication of apartheid. There is therefore at the present time no occasion for undue haste for the relaxation of international pressure.

(Mr. De l'Estrac, Mauritius)

Violence and the temptation to exploit internal divisions could easily jeopardize the chances of peace and stability. The agreement concluded in August between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the South African Government represents the best hope for the complete eradication of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic and non-racial society in South Africa. All parties that are really committed to a peaceful solution should work towards the preparation of a new Constitution that will meet the hopes and aspirations of the people of South Africa as a whole. The emergence of a strong, united, multiracial and democratic South Africa will bring peace and stability to the region and contribute significantly to world economy.

At a broader level, 1989 and 1990 have witnessed events which have led to a fundamental restructuring of the world political system. Today, more than ever, the interdependence of nations is the basis for fruitful international relations. At both international and regional levels, this unique Organization, which is the United Nations, is the right vehicle for collective action, especially in moments of crisis and distress.

It has thus far mounted successful operations in Namibia and Central America. I am positive it could play a crucial role in resolving major regional conflicts, for example in Cambodia, where certain encouraging developments have taken place at the Jakarta meeting.

In the Middle East, we welcome the new dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union on the issue. We are more than ever convinced that an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, constitutes the only prospect for a comprehensive settlement recognizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and for enduring peace in the region.

(Mr. De l'Estrac, Mauritius)

We also hope that meaningful dialogue and consultation in response to the legitimate aspirations of the Korean people will pave the way in the not too distant future for the peaceful unification of Korea.

In this context my country will give favourable consideration to the admission of the Republic of Korea as a Member of the Organization without jeopardizing the objective of unification and without excluding the simultaneous membership of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We should not lose sight of the relationship between disarmament and development. It is known that developing countries spend some $200 billion a year, representing some 20 per cent of their budget, on armaments. Admittedly, the security needs of States vary considerably according to geopolitical factors, but this expenditure still represents a staggering figure. It is a waste of resources when one considers that there is a negative outflow of some $50 billion a year from developing nations for debt servicing alone. Such a situation cannot be allowed to continue. The solution is as much a political as an economic one.

Earlier this year, at its eighteenth special session, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, which we believe should provide the appropriate guidance for the drawing-up and adoption at the Assembly of an international development strategy in the context of the fourth development decade.

As the world economy becomes more integrated, the international community needs a cohesive framework within which to address global economic issues. In this regard the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Paris is particularly important. We welcome the adoption of a new programme of action for debt relief and the other concrete measures taken to alleviate the economic plight of the least developed countries.

(Mr. De l'Estrac, Mauritius)

The least developed countries require, in addition,better opportunities for trade diversification and preferential access to markets and accrued capital investments. That is the only way they can overcome severe structural problems, develop their human resources and achieve a sustainable rate of growth.

The United Nations also hosted in June this year a meeting on island developing countries organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Small island States belonging mostly to the category of least developed countries have intrinsic disabilities which severely contrain their already limited range of development options in an unfavourable economic climate. This fact has unfortunately not been fully acknowledged yet. we must therefore pursue our efforts in this direction through closer exchanges and co-operation between various island groups, whose importance in different regions of the world have so far been under-estimated.

(Mr. De l'Estrac, Mauritius)

I am aware that your country, Mr. President, has taken the initiative of organizing another meeting of this kind for next year, and is playing an important role in improving contacts between small, island States hampered by remoteness and isolation.

Free trade is the cornerstone of co-operation. For small, island nations which are economically interdependent and extremely vulnerable to external factors, the development of a more open, viable and durable multilateral trading system is essential. So too is a stable economic environment. The Uruguay Round was launched to address serious concerns in this area. The general liberalization of trade in recent years has been persistently undermined by protectionism and a weakening of regulations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Developing countries in particular have suffered from this kind of instability and lack of discipline in the trading system. Their efforts to implement the policy of trade and not aid are being thwarted by new forms of protectionism. Trade in sectors such as textiles, clothing, footwear and agriculture, where developing countries have a comparative advantage, have been particularly subject to discriminatory treatment. Such practices have impaired to a large extent the ability of developing countries to overcome their external-debt problems and promote their economic growth and development.

The economies of the developing countries have further worsened in the wake of the Gulf crisis. To avoid a catastrophic situation, the international community needs to make special efforts to come to the assistance of developing countries adversely affected by spiralling oil prices. In this connection, we make a special appeal for a multilateral relief fund to be set up to help offset the additional economic problems being suffered by these countries.

(Mr. De l'Estrac, Mauritius)

Another, equally vital series of negotiations will take place in 1992, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. We hope that the obstacles we encounter will be overcome. The Preparatory Committee of the Conference has already made extensive proposals to ensure fruitful discussions of a comprehensive agenda.

There is a limit to the degree of ecological stress that our planet can endure. The irreversible damage inflicted every day on forests and in the atmosphere, the problem of marine pollution caused by excessive dumping of toxic industrial waste, and the overexploitation of fishery resources should help us draw the necessary lessons before it is too late. The success of the Conference in drawing up strategies to stop and reverse the effects of environmental degradation will require political will and sacrifice, but on this depends the fate of our only planet, Earth.

The United Nations has in recent years faced increasingly daunting challenges. We are confident that, with the emergence of this era of historic challenges and changes, our Organization will continue to play an active role in achieving the objectives of our Charter.

ADDRESS BY MAJOR GENERAL JUSTIN METSING LEKHANYA, CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COUNCIL AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, and inviting him to address the Assembly.

Mr. LEKHANYA (Lesotho): Permit me to offer you, Sir, sincere congratulations upon your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. We have confidence in your ability to guide the work of our Assembly towards the success we expect.

At this early juncture, allow me also to pay a tribute to your predecessor, Major General Joseph Garba, former Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, for the effective manner in which he conducted the business of the last session.

The auspicious occasion afforded by this session of the General Assembly, marking the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century, should be for all of us a unique moment, a moment to pause for reflection as we seek collectively to build a new and better future for mankind.

The forty-fifth session is taking place amid epoch-making events throughout the world, tending towards restructuring of the international political order to attain durable international peace and stability, and mutual understanding and co-operation within the world community of nations. We are indeed beginning a new decade while standing on the threshold of a new world political order and poised to see the triumph of the vision embodied in the Charter of the United Nations

The collapse of the edifice of the cold-war era must be not only a challenge to us to rid ourselves of the remaining legacies of that period; it must also renew and inspire our determination to consolidate the emerging spirit of co-operation by translating the decisions of this body into practical action. Further, it must underscore the urgent need to enhance the effectiveness of our Organization in its performance of its noble tasks.

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

We note with deepest concern that, despite individual and collective efforts to rehabilitate the economies of the developing world, the socio-economic situation is worsening, particularly in Africa. The problem of external indebtedness still persists, and developing countries continue to be net exporters of resources to the developed countries and multilateral financial institutions. The structural adjustment programmes undertaken by most African countries under the auspices of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in most cases at heavy political and social cost, have yet to yield significant results.

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

It is our belief that the recent Declaration on International Economic Co-operation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, will provide a framework, not only for the international development strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade but also for a new world agenda on the issues of economic co-operation and development.

The year 1990 marks the conclusion of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The final review of the programme during the current session of the Assembly must also critically examine the measures that are needed for accelerated growth and development for Africa in the period that lies ahead.

Marking the fortieth anniversary of the multilateral technical co-operation programme, 1990 is a significant occasion for renewed international commitment to the ideals of multilateralism. The success of the historic mission of the United Nations Development Programme in the developing countries has, in large measure, been attributable to the basic characteristics of its assistance, namely, responsiveness to the peculiar circumstances and priorities of the beneficiary countries, and the grant nature of its support programmes. We appeal to the donor community, especially the developed countries, to lend enhanced financial support to the United Nations Development Programme.

Lesotho joins in the global consensus on the urgent necessity for combined international efforts to save our planet from the looming catastrophe resulting from the deterioration of the world's environment. A number of regional initiatives aimed at highlighting the need to give priority to environmental issues have been taken, including the Declaration by the African Heads of State, in July last year, on the African Year of the Environment. The most important initiative,

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

however, remains the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be convened in Brazil in 1992. It is our hope that that Conference will result in the adoption of a global plan of action for harmonizing human development activities and rational management of the environment.

Lesotho remains convinced that the emerging world political order of partnership and collective endeavour in confronting world problems cannot survive the turbulence of its environs unless it is based on the universal recognition of the primacy of law in international relations. For this reason, we attach great importance to the proclamation by this Assembly of the decade 1990-1999 as the United Nations decade of peace and international law.

At this crucial juncture in the evolution of the history of mankind, we must increasingly lend our collective support to the efforts that are under way, in various parts of the globe, to build a future for mankind in which the welfare and dignity of the human person takes centre stage.

The international community would indeed have failed in its responsibility if it did not demonstrate its solidarity and practical support, both moral and material, for the peoples of Eastern Europe, Africa and Latin America that are engaged in the process of socio-economic transformation through democratization and consolidation of democratic institutions. These efforts can succeed only if due recognition is made of the realities obtaining in individual countries and the right of each nation to develop democratic institutions suitable to its own socio-economic environment.

The linkage between democracy and development has long been established. It is against this background that we in Lesotho have now embarked on a firm initiative aimed at returning our country to full democratic rule by June 1992. To this end, a constituent assembly comprised of personalities representing virtually

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

all shades of political persuasion in Lesotho has convened to work out a new constitution for Lesotho, using the 1966 Lesotho independence Constitution, which is based on multiparty democracy, as a working model.

The issues of democracy alone should not, however, constitute the radius of our interest in the humanitarian sphere. We hail as constructive the recent convening of the World Summit for Children and the adoption of the World Declaration and Plan of Action for the child, which we believe will constitute a new framework for our collective efforts towards ensuring a better future for our children in the 1990s and beyond.

Our concern with the deteriorating refugee situation, particularly in Africa and other developing parts of the world, has not diminished. In this regard, we derive great encouragement from the Declaration by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in July this year, in which, among other things, they pledged their determination to make renewed efforts to eradicate the root causes of the refugee problem in Africa.

While the political complexion of our globe is undergoing rapid change and a new climate of rapprochement and reconciliation is asserting itself, we cannot fail to observe that the new détente is still limited in scope and that the pace of progress in reducing the world's arsenals of war and mass destruction remains slow at best.

We welcome the dramatic breakthrough made by the super-Powers on the issue of nuclear-arms reduction. Regrettably, we witness at the same time a dangerous escalation in the proliferation of both nuclear and chemical warfare technology. Added to this is the intensified race by countries, including developing countries, to accumulate conventional armaments. In the process, scarce resources needed for development are wasted.

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

Lesotho particularly looks forward to the early conclusion of an international convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, which we believe is one of the key issues facing the General Assembly at this forty-fifth session.

Recent world developments have clearly demonstrated that there is a distinct need for an effective mechanism by which the security of small nations must be guaranteed under international law, ensuring not only their protection but also their ability to prosper with a modicum of economic development for their survival. This underscores the necessity for a dual strategy by this world body, involving, on the one hand, the elaboration of international agreements on the security guarantees for these countries and, on the other, the establishment, under United Nations auspices, of a mechanism through which part of the resources released as a result of disarmament measures could be devoted to the economic and social advancement of all peoples, particularly those in the least developed countries.

As the world steers off confrontational paths and extricates itself from regional conflicts, the southern African subregion has not lived in isolation from these positive influences. We have witnessed in Namibia the victory of the Namibian people in the struggle for their right to self-determination and the triumph of the principles of the United Nations Charter over the scourge of colonialism.

Lesotho remains hopeful that all States Members of our Organization will continue to demonstrate the requisite solidarity and commitment in executing the remaining part of our collective responsibility to Namibia, which is to assist it with material resources needed for the consolidation of its independence.

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

The international community and the people of South Africa have travelled a long way in their fight against apartheid. Only determination and conviction in the right to freedom could sustain a people in such a bitter and fateful struggle spanning a period of almost half a century. It is quite a long time since this Assembly declared apartheid a crime against humanity, and yet only last year this Assembly, in a special session, was still seized of the issue of its elimination.

We therefore cannot but welcome the long-awaited positive developments that we see unfolding in South Africa today towards the elimination of apartheid through dialogue and peaceful negotiation. The commencement of dialogue between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the South African Government at Groote Schuur, and later in Pretoria, was an epoch-making event, hopefully prefacing the start of substantive constitutional talks for the creation of a just and democratic South Africa.

We commend Mr. Nelson Mandela and the leadership of the ANC for the dignity and statesmanship with which they have been able to advance the cause of peace, justice and freedom since their release and return from exile. Equally, we applaud their unflinching determination to leave to history the bitter memories of the past and to marshall their energies towards creating a new, democratic South Africa.

We urge all anti-apartheid organizations, in particular the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), to co-ordinate their efforts and to reach a broad measure of consensus on strategies for a negotiated demise of apartheid. We recognize the urgent need for the international community to enhance financial support to these organizations to assist them to rebuild and consolidate their internal political structures within South Africa.

It has to be conceded that the pillars of apartheid are still in place and that the road ahead is not only difficult but very uncertain. We have reason,

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

however, to believe that State President F.W. De Klerk has played a major role in creating a new climate of hope for South Africa, and for this he merits the encouragement of this body.

Lesotho continues to be gravely concerned at the current wave of black intercommunal violence in South Africa which, if it remains unchecked, may delay the negotiation process towards the total eradication of apartheid.

We commend the initiatives that are being taken by the Governments of Angola and Mozambique to solve their internal problems through peaceful dialogue. We are hopeful that the international community will continue to assist these efforts in the light of the prevailing spirit of international peace and co-operation.

Concerning the situation in Liberia, we cannot but register our support for initiatives intended to bring an end to the civil war in that sister country.

The Kingdom of Lesotho has always held the conviction that a lasting solution to the issue of Western Sahara can only be realized through direct negotiations between Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. We continue to support all the positive efforts being made by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, as well as the Non-Aligned Movement, towards finding a durable solution to the question of Western Sahara, particularly in seeking to ensure that necessary conditions for the holding of a national referendum prevail without any form of constraint.

We welcome the growing realization by all the parties to the conflict in Cambodia that the time has now come to respond positively to the international efforts that are being made to assist in bringing about a negotiated and comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian problem. It is our hope that the newly-created Supreme National Council will live up to all our expectations in working for national reconciliation and an early restoration of peace and democracy

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

We are concerned at the impasse in the Middle East peace efforts and the resultant escalating tension. The Assembly has the obligation to inject a new lease of life into the positive efforts long initiated by the United Nations towards realizing durable peace in the region. The principal goal should remain the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Arab territories and the convening of the Middle East peace conference.

The recent invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq has brought about a new and totally unacceptable situation in the Gulf area. We in Lesotho condemn this act as not only illegal and poisonous to the prevailing spirit of international détente, but also as a dangerous precedent for the continued existence and security of small States. Lesotho stands in full support of all the measures already taken by the Security Council

In our view, a lasting solution to the crisis can come about only through the restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi occupation forces. It is our hope that the international co-operation that was elicited by this crisis can set the standards for the action that is expected of the international community in future in response to similar crises elsewhere.

Being a small State ourselves, we admire the indomitable spirit of the Kuwaiti people in resisting the Iraqi aggression and resolutely continuing to maintain their nationhood.

The unfolding new era of maturing international relations of peace and stability is, to a large measure, attributable to the increasing efficacy of the United Nations system. It is therefore befitting to seize this opportunity to express to our Secretary-General, His Excellency Perez de Cuellar, our feelings of renewed confidence in his tireless and praiseworthy efforts to promote and strengthen international peace and co-operation.

(Mr. Lekhanya, Lesotho)

We have just learned of the sad passing of the Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates. On behalf of the people and Government of Lesotho and on my own behalf, I offer our sincere condolences.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Military Council and the Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho for the statement he has just made.

Major General Justin Metsing Lekhanya, Chairman of the Military Council and Council of Ministers of the Kingdom of Lesotho, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. MAYNARD (Bahamas): I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. Given your experience and political skills, we are confident that the affairs of this Assembly will come to a successful conclusion under your wise leadership. May I take this opportunity to express my appreciation and congratulations to your predecessor, Ambassador Joseph Garba of Nigeria, who was exemplary in his conduct of the affairs of the General Assembly.*

I also wish on behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas warmly to welcome Namibia and the Principality of Liechtenstein to membership in the United Nations. I also extend our heartfelt congratulations to Germany on its reunification.

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* Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil, Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Our hope for a more enduring world peace has been challenged by Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The Bahamas urges all nations involved to exhaust every effort to resolve this situation without further violence. Central to international relations are the prohibition of the threat or use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. These are principles which small States, such as the Bahamas, hold dear. Hence, the Bahamas joined the world community in denouncing the invasion and occupation of Kuwait, and in calling for the immediate withdrawal of all Iraqi troops and the restoration of the legitimate Government of Kuwait. The Bahamas has endorsed all action taken by the Security Council in this regard and, in particular, it has undertaken to uphold the sanctions imposed under Security Council resolutions until they achieve their desired results.

A comprehensive peace in the Middle East is urgently needed. Therefore, we support the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and involving all parties to the conflict. We urge those directly concerned to create conditions that would ensure the success of such a conference. We again reiterate our full support for Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders, and reaffirm our commitment to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Continuing violence and dissension lead us to conclude that the pillars of apartheid remain intact. The opportunity presented by the conclusion of the Pretoria Minute between the Government of South Africa and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and all efforts to remove obstacles to negotiations for a democratic, non-racial South Africa must be energetically pursued.

It is in this context that the Bahamas welcomed the consensus adoption by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session of the Declaration on South

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Africa, which is drafted in full compliance with international principles. It ought not be that we adhere to these principles sometimes, disregard them at other times and shun them in favour of yet other principles at other times. Sanctions should not be lifted until there is real and irreversible movement towards the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. These conditions have not been met. The Bahamas, therefore, continues to support sanctions, and urges the international community also to maintain and renew its resolve.

The experience in Namibia clearly indicated that change is possible, even in seemingly intractable situations. We have witnessed what could be accomplished by a people's drive for self-determination, when supported by the commitment of the international community. The Bahamas would now wish to see a commitment to the process of peace and democracy demonstrated to the fullest extent in Haiti.

The Government and the people of Haiti have made clear their desire to move their country forward on the road to democracy and development. The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), meeting recently in Jamaica, once again took note of this encouraging position, and reiterated their unequivocal commitment to the goals and objectives which Haiti had set for itself.

We believe that the United Nations must also be actively involved in Haiti's quest for democracy, and we are confident that the Organization will overcome attendant difficulties and respond favourably to Haiti's request for security and other assistance in the holding of elections.

We must envision more for Haiti. In keeping with the decision of the Heads of CARICOM, the Bahamas would urge the convening of an internatinal conference on the reconstruction of Haiti, following successful democratic elections in that country. We believe that an effective solution to this situation will greatly facilitate the maintenance of peace and stability in the entire Caribbean region.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

We are pleased that the 1988 Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances will come into force in November of this year. The Bahamas stands ready to join other States parties to the Convention in the strict implementation of its provisions. We consider that action taken by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, specifically in the area of organized crime, and the adoption of model legislation in areas including extradition, will greatly facilitate the process of implementing of many of the provisions of the Convention.

Startling and dramatic events in Latin America last year considerably elevated the search for solutions to the illicit drug problem. This year has been one of urgent and intense international activity, aimed at devising new strategies to counteract the drug problem. At the seventeenth special session of the General Assembly, convened in February of this year, the commitment to fight the scourge of drug abuse was affirmed at the highest political level, as demonstrated by the adoption by consensus of a political Declaration and a global programme of action. To our satisfaction, it has been widely recognized that measures to reduce demand must not be neglected and must be given equal emphasis with production and trafficking.

The international community took the opportunity to review, at the level of experts, the capacity of the United Nations to lead the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and to arrive at a better understanding of the complex illicit drug trade. Indeed, the Bahamas already has in place strong regulations and laws aimed at counteracting money laundering and at forfeiture of the proceeds of drug crimes. We are convinced that, with adequate safeguards to protect legitimate international banking, we can deprive international drug cartels of the proceeds of their evil trade, and destroy their sole purpose for existing.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

Does the political will exist to halt and reverse the deadly effects of drug abuse on our societies and to stem the violence it engenders? The answer must be: "Yes".

At the national level, the Bahamas follows a comprehensive strategy encompassing interdiction efforts, prevention, public information, severe sanctions for drug offenders and compulsory testing for security forces. Our co-operation with other States at the bilateral and multilateral levels, particularly in operational activities, has been widely recognized as being exemplary.

Consequently, the traffic in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances into and through the Bahamas has been drastically decreased, and there has been a slowing, though not a halt, of drug abuse by Bahamians. We will continue to take vigorous national action, and will join in international initiatives to make drug control more effective.

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

The first year of the final decade of the twentieth century is ending with signs of both hope and disillusionment. The rise in the price of energy, the massive increase in external-debt servicing and the loss of or reduction in foreign-exchange earnings have all combined to make the 1980s a lost decade for development. The United Nations and individual Member countries should pay increasing attention to reversing that trend.

Indeed, in the Bahamas we work even harder in traditional economic sectors such as tourism and banking. We follow the axiom that we must do better what we know how to do well. We must make our good better and our better best. That has certainly been our experience in tourism and financial services.

At the same time, we continue to exploit every window of opportunity for diversification, restructuring and investment. We seek investment not only in agriculture, fisheries and tourism, but also in the sophisticated service and light industrial sectors with high employment and export and import-substitution potential.

Political, social and economic stability is a critical element in maintaining confidence and hence in stimulating investment and output. But stability alone is not sufficient. The challenge is to shift our emphasis to the economic and social well-being of most of the planet and to keep it on a path of sustainable growth. I have therefore instructed my delegation to focus more on economic development and investment promotion and on reorienting the Organization to deal afresh and more effectively with the economic issues I have mentioned.

Because of important linkages with the economies of the United States of America, Canada, Japan and an integrated Europe, the Bahamas especially applauds the determined efforts of those countries to bring their economies into balance and encourages them to pursue a fresh and vigorous programme dramatically to increase

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

and redirect real transfers of public and private finance, aid, technology and trade to enhance world economic development.

We invite the United Nations itself to adopt a fresh approach and to take another look at areas which have held out promise in the past but have yielded little success in the development of many developing countries. The Bahamas is of the view that every effort must now be made to ensure that the 1990s is a decade of opportunity. Greater effort must be exerted to reorient the global economy to make it more responsive to the needs of the developing world and to sustain growth and development.

The Bahamas is therefore encouraged by the international consensus on the Declaration adopted by the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. We consider particularly relevant its call for specialized agencies with specific developmental mandates to play a vital role in international co-operation for the revitalization of development in the 1990s.

The importance of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations to alleviating the plight of developing countries cannot be exaggerated. Hence comprehensive reform in areas of trade of particular interest to developing countries will become a realistic prospect. The Bahamas advocates work for the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round. In this vien the Bahamas hopes also that the conclusions reached by meetings of the least developed countries in Paris this year will help reverse their marginalization in the world economy.

Strategies for development must also be environmentally sound. The Bahamas firmly supports the Conference on Environment and Development, scheduled to be held in 1992. We are confident that the opportunity will be grasped not only to consolidate current efforts to save the world's environment from degradation, but

(Mr. Maynard, Bahamas)

to establish a new and effective régime for managing and safeguarding our environment, particularly the marine environment.

Member States are increasingly requesting the United Nations to assume a leadership role in a myriad of social, economic and humanitarian questions. We have collectively taken decisive strides to address crucial international issues, including drug abuse, illicit trafficking, debt, poverty, development, crime and apartheid. Commitment to the well-being of the children of the world was reaffirmed by Heads of State and Government in the recent historic Summit for Children.*

High hopes and expectations are being placed in the United Nations; yet its weak financial situation continues to jeopardize its ability to perform. Expectations must be matched with requisite financial commitments. We hope that arrears will be addressed as a matter of priority so that the Organization may cease having to juggle resources to survive. It is our joint responsibility to ensure the Organization's operational efficiency so that its prospects for positive accomplishment can be enhanced.

You see, the United Nations remains our best alternative to international chaos and our best approach to international order. Important new dynamics have been introduced by the rapprochement of the super-Powers, and by dramatic events in various parts of the world such as Eastern Europe and Namibia. Collective security has been allowed to work for the first time. As a result, the Organization has been greatly strengthened. As always, the Bahamas pledges to continue to be a committed and active participant in all efforts to improve our Organization and our world.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 154

ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE TO HAITI: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/45/L.2)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Bolivia, who will introduce draft resolution A/45/L.2.

Mr. NAVAJAS MOGRO (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): Under agenda item 154 I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution in document A/45/L.2 on behalf of the delegations of the Bahamas, Belize, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, Haiti, Honduras, Peru and Venezuela and on behalf of my own delegation, that of Bolivia.

This draft resolution was prepared bearing in mind the request of the President of the Provisional Government of Haiti, Mrs. Ertha Pascal Trouillot, contained in letters addressed to the Secretary-General on 23 June 1990, 9 August 1990 and 14 September 1990, in which she requested technical assistance from the United Nations for the forthcoming electoral process in her country.

The draft resolution contains the political stipulations and the basic requirements for the requested technical assistance in the elections. It reaffirms the sovereign right of the people of Haiti to choose and participate freely in the determination of their own destiny without any external interference with a view to consolidating the country's democratic institutions. It requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with regional organizations and Member States, to provide the Haitian Government with the broadest administrative and technical assistance in the electoral process. The co-operation that would be provided to Haiti would include the presence of persons to observe voter registration and specialized staff to observe the implementation of the electoral security plans.

In addition, the draft resolution urges the international community and international organizations to increase their technical, economic and financial co-operation with Haiti, in order to support the Haitian people's economic and social development efforts.

(Mr. Navajas Mogro, Bolivia)

The view of the sponsors of the draft resolution, and in particular the view of the entire Latin American and Caribbean Group, is that the technical assistance for the Haitian elections should be considered as support for the domestic efforts of the Haitian authorities and a response to the request by Mrs. Pascal Trouillot, the President of the Provisional Government of Haiti, and that such assistance does not have and should not have any connection with questions of international peace and security.

Hence, we trust that the highest priority will be given to this draft resolution, whose sole aim is to facilitate the electoral process in that sister country of the Latin American and Caribbean region.

In this regard, Mr. President, I would request you to see how the adoption of this draft resolution can be facilitated so that the Fifth Committee can take a decision on its budgetary implications with the urgency required.

Mr. AUGUSTE (Haiti) (interpretation from French): First of all, I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to guide the work of this session of the General Assembly. I presented my credentials only yesterday, but I have already noted the skill with which you have been conducting the proceedings here since your election to your post.

The question of Haiti is on the agenda. I thank particularly all the Governments and the representatives and the countries which, in full awareness of the situation, have done so much to ensure the submission of the draft resolution before the Assembly this morning.

I must say - and I emphasize this - that there is some urgency involved because the question of assistance has been before the United Nations for more than

(Mr. Auguste, Haiti)

four months. There is urgency because registration for the elections began on 5 October 1990 and the elections themselves are supposed to take place on 16 December 1990.

Generally speaking, it is felt that it is the third-world countries that procrastinate and have no sense of time; but I must say that on this occasion the question was brought before the United Nations in good time and that the procedure followed by the Provisional Government - headed this time by a woman, Mrs. Ertha Pascal Trouillot - is in fact in accordance with United Nations rules and regulations. Mrs. Ertha Pascal Trouillot addressed a letter to the Secretary-General in which she stated very clearly and specifically the fields in which assistance is being sought. She specified that what we need are observers and experts with experience of public order and security. It would be an insult to the many jurists in the Assembly to repeat the terms of that request. It was discussed by the Latin American and Caribbean Group. A draft resolution has been submitted. It remains for me only to ask, on behalf of the Government - which this time intends to provide all the precautions and guarantees necessary to make the election credible, democratic and honest - that all members of the Assembly vote in favour of this draft resolution and that in the very near future the constitutional and procedural formalities be carried out to ensure its full implementation at the appropriate time so that this country, which has helped many others, will in turn be helped in these special circumstances.

In order not to prolong this statement, I reserve the right to speak again if necessary. I hope that I shall have to speak only for the purpose of expressing thanks to the General Assembly.

The PRESIDENT: I urge the Chairmen of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to act expeditiously on this matter, this afternoon.

Members will appreciate the urgency of responding to the Haitian Government's request for assistance. Accordingly, I plan to have the Assembly take up draft resolution A/45/L.2 for action after the general debate at tomorrow morning's meeting.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.